

Facilitators: Between a rock and a hard place

Andrew Gibbs

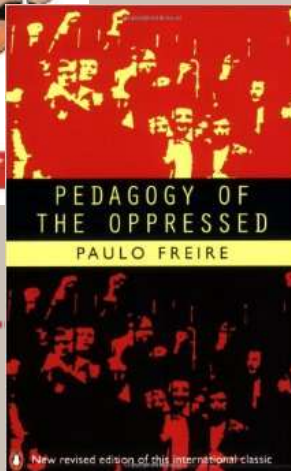
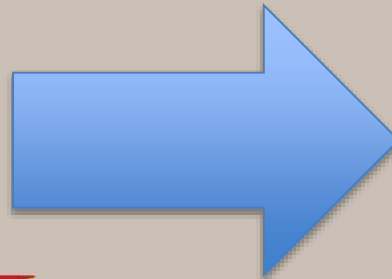
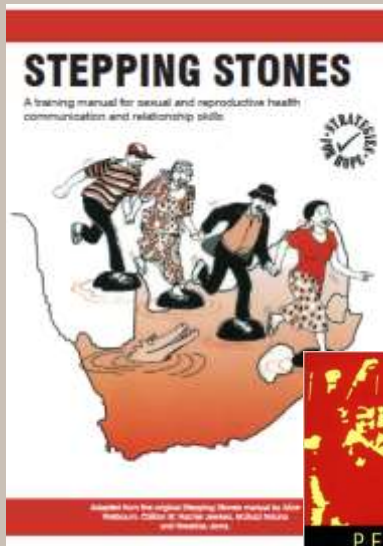
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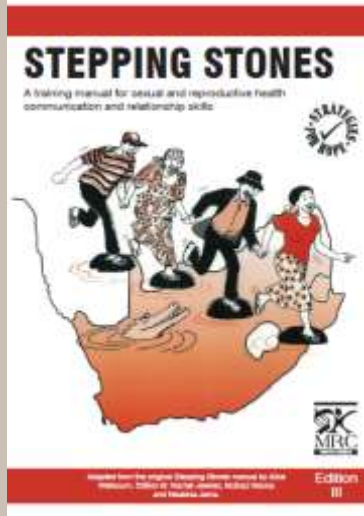


Facilitators – the bedrock of interventions

Facilitators are the unsung heroes of participatory gender-transformative interventions – they are the ones that turn manuals/conceptual ideas into practice and yet we think very little about them – especially in the context of research



Stepping Stones and Creating Futures



“Sessions sought to encourage participants to reflect on gendered norms, communication, HIV, contraception and violence, as well as strengthen their livelihoods, through critical thinking about futures and making plans for income generation based on a realistic assessment of available resources. Sessions draw explicitly on adult education theories, in particular Freire’s work, and used a range of well-known participatory techniques such as drama, discussion, participatory mapping and reflective diaries (journaling) to encourage group discussion, reflection and critical thinking.” (Gibbs et al, under review)



The rock: Freirian methodologies in the context of didactic, individualised education

But there were huge histories and structural constraints working against them:

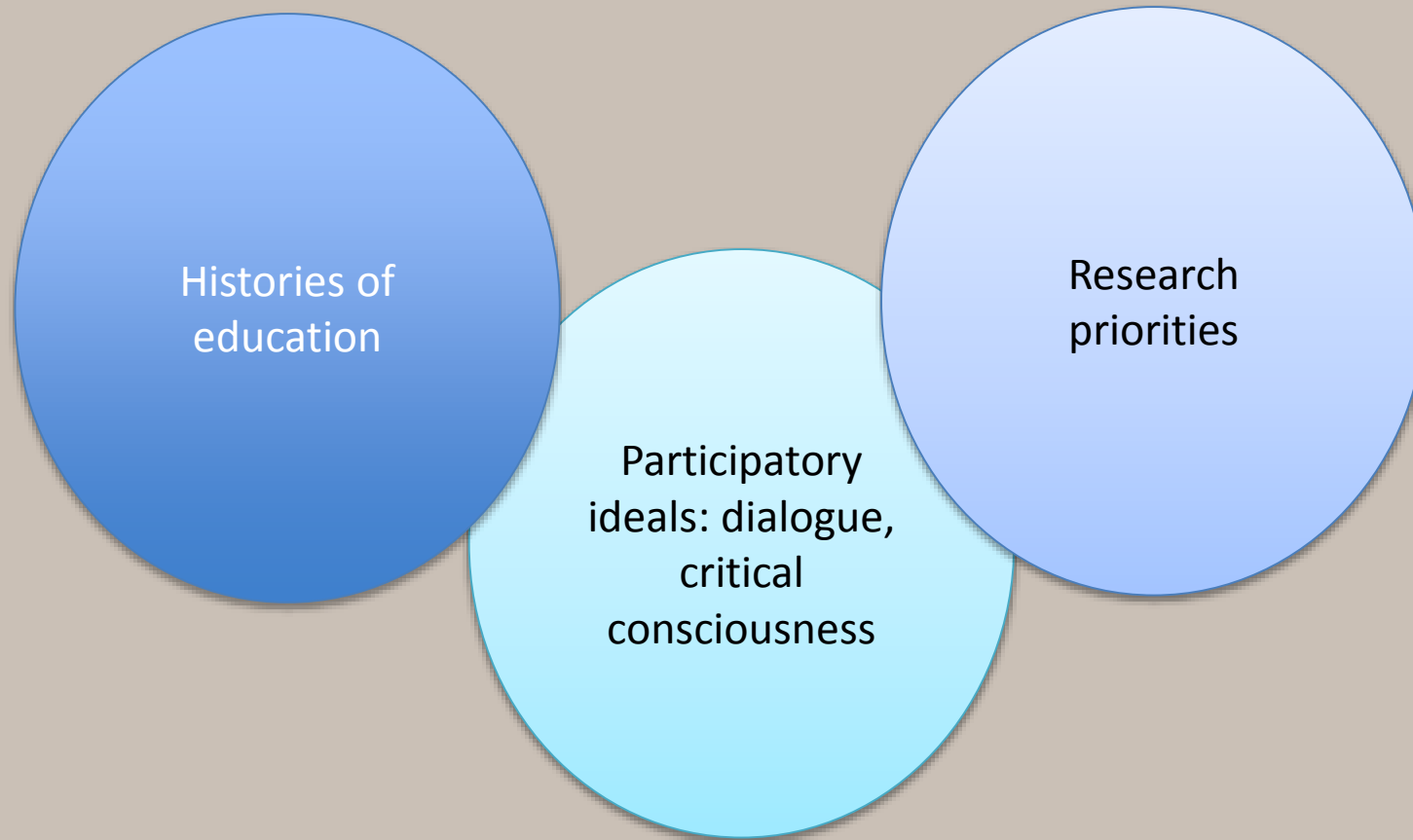
- **Histories of education – almost their only experience of education was didactic and top-down**
- **Individualised understandings of behaviour, rather than social understandings**

The hard place: research

What do researchers emphasise?

- **Broad commitment to participatory, Freirian ideals e.g. “effective programmes are commonly participatory...” (Ellsberg et al, 2014)**
- **Adherence, dosage & attendance – key issues in intervention research and promoted through incentives**

Between a rock and a hard place



Conclusion

Facilitators deeply committed to translating participatory ideas into reality yet caught between:

- Histories of education and production of knowledge
- Research priorities

Need to do more thinking (and research) around how we balance these and recognise that interventions and research cannot be thought of as separate entities, but how they shape each other

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